

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
January 30 - February 6, 2013

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1. [Obama Calls on Congress to Avoid Sequestration](#) (02-05-2013)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5, 2013 – President Barack Obama today called on Congress to avoid deep, across-the-board spending cuts looming March 1 under a “sequestration” mechanism in budget law and to take a balanced approach to America’s debt problems.

If sequestration happens, hundreds of thousands of Defense Department civilian employees could be furloughed and readiness of the military force will plummet, Pentagon officials have said.

The American economy is poised to make progress in 2013, the president said in remarks at the White House today, but sequestration could put an end to any forward movement.

“We’ve seen the effects that political dysfunction can have on our progress,” Obama said. “The drawn-out process for resolving the ‘fiscal cliff’ hurt consumer confidence. The threat of massive automatic cuts has already started to affect business decisions.”

While it is critical for the U.S. government to cut wasteful spending, “we can’t just cut our way to prosperity,” Obama said.

“Deep, indiscriminate cuts to things like education and training, energy and national security will cost us jobs, and it will slow down our recovery,” he added.

The president emphasized that sequestration does not have to happen.

“For all of the drama and disagreements we've had over the past few years, Democrats and Republicans have still been able to come together and cut the deficit by more than \$2.5 trillion through a mix of spending cuts and higher rates on taxes for the wealthy,” he said.

“A balanced approach has achieved more than \$2.5 trillion in deficit reduction,” the president continued. “That’s more than halfway towards the \$4 trillion in deficit reduction that economists and elected officials from both parties believe is required to stabilize our debt.”

Obama called on Congress to finish the job with a balanced mix of spending cuts and more tax reform. Though he favors a balanced approach that will solve the problem, the president said, he is realistic.

“I know that a full budget may not be finished before March 1,” he said. “And unfortunately, that’s the date when a series of harmful automatic cuts to job-creating investments in defense spending ... are scheduled to take effect.”

If Congress cannot act immediately on a bigger package, Obama said, “then I believe that they should at least pass a smaller package of spending cuts and tax reforms that would delay the economically damaging effects of the sequester for a few more months until Congress finds a way to replace these cuts with a smarter solution.”

There’s no reason “that the jobs of thousands of Americans who work in national security or education or clean energy -- not to mention the growth of the entire economy -- should be put in jeopardy just because folks in Washington couldn’t come together,” he added. “Our economy right now is headed in the right direction, and it will stay that way, as long as there aren’t any more self-inflicted wounds coming out of Washington.”

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[In Munich, Carter Details Sequestration's 'Reckless' Reality](#)

2. Carter Meets with Jordanian Leaders, Praises U.S. Troops (02-05-2013)

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

AMMAN, Jordan, Feb. 5, 2013 – On the final leg of his six-day visit to Europe and the Middle East, Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter met with military leaders and Jordan’s King Abdullah II here today, and praised U.S. forces stationed here during what he called a pivotal time for the region.

Carter spoke with young U.S. soldiers this afternoon before shaking their hands, giving them commemorative coins and posing with them in photographs.

The deputy secretary also expressed appreciation for Jordan as a premier U.S. ally lately burdened with caring for thousands of refugees fleeing over its borders to escape hunger, brutality and death

rising in Syria since March 2011 by the clash between opposition fighters and the Bashar Assad regime.

“I’ve been in the region for several days, and around the region many times,” Carter told the soldiers. “The good news is that everybody wants to be a friend to the United States, ... not only because we’re good at what we do, but because we’re good. And they like and value that -- none better than the Jordanians.”

In October, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced that Pentagon officials were working with Turkey and Jordan to help with collateral humanitarian and security issues affecting them because of Syria.

“We have been working with Jordan for a period of time now on a number of the issues that have developed as a result of what’s happening in Syria,” Panetta said during a news conference at the time.

Humanitarian relief was among those issues, as was help for Jordan in monitoring Syrian chemical and biological weapon sites and determining how best to respond if such weapons were used, the secretary added.

“We’ve also been working with Jordan to try to develop their own military and operational capabilities in the event of any contingency,” Panetta said.

“We have a group of our forces there,” he added, “working to help them build a headquarters and to ensure that we make the relationship between the United States and Jordan a strong one to deal with all the possible consequences” of the war in Syria.

In a cool and hazy Jordanian capital today, Carter started his day at the U.S. Embassy, where he met with Deputy Chief of Mission Stephanie Williams and received a briefing from the country team.

Afterward, in the embassy’s tiled circular courtyard, the deputy secretary greeted each of the seven Marine Corps guards, took photographs with them, gave them coins from his office, and thanked them for their service to the embassy and the nation.

He also chatted, shook hands and posed with several members of the embassy staff.

Carter later traveled to one of King Abdullah II’s royal palaces, Bab As-Salaam, meaning “the Gate of Peace.” Joining the king and the deputy secretary there were Dr. Fayez Tarawneh, chief of the Royal Diwan, or the main executive office of the king; Imad Fakhoury, the king’s office director; and Gen. Mashal al Zaben, chairman of defense.

Next, just before Carter spoke with Army troops at the military installation in Amman, he sat down for lunch there with 10 of the young soldiers working in Jordan to help with repercussions of the Syrian crisis.

One of the soldiers was Spc. Sarah Moyer, who has been in the Army for about 18 months and has five years to go on her contract. Moyer is a military police soldier from McDonough, Ga., who works in the security force on the Amman installation.

Moyer joined the Army initially to increase her education, she said.

"I know it betters you in a lot of ways. It increases your physical training and brings up morale and teaches you teamwork," she noted. "A lot of main values you hold in the Army convinced me to join. So I'll uphold those values and learn more about them."

Marquise Washington is an information technology specialist from Los Angeles who joined the Army about a year ago when he was looking for a stable career. "I've had a good experience so far here in Jordan and in my military career," the father of two said.

After lunch, Carter congratulated the soldiers on their courage and commitment and told them to keep up the good work.

"It's sad what's going on in Syria and what the Assad regime is doing and willing to do to its people," he told the soldiers. "He's on the wrong side of history and will lose and suffer the consequences in the end."

"I don't know when that will be -- how many months or even years -- but that is a result that is inevitable," Carter continued. "And ... until that happens, your help is going to be needed and our help is going to be needed, and that's what your mission is all about."

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[3. Biden, French President Hollande on France-U.S. Issues \(02-04-2013\)](#)

*Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden and French President Francois Hollande
Presidential Palace, Paris, France*

PRESIDENT HOLLANDE: (In progress as translated) -- this President here.

France will continue its mission allowing Mali to regain its territorial integrity, and then leave the African troops to deal with it. And tomorrow, it will be an operation for -- a peacekeeping operation.

We also talked about Syria. I noted that we shared the same views. We are noting that the situation is worsening day after day with a number of civilian casualties. And what should be the settlement of that crisis is in a deadlock. We consider that Bashar al-Assad should go, and we are doing our utmost for a transition conditional solution to be found. So this is the reason why we have been supporting the Syrian National Coalition, like the United States.

We also talked about Iran. And here again, we regret to note that, notwithstanding all of the efforts, Iran is still rejecting transparency and compliance with its international obligations. There is yet another appointment that's been taken very soon for negotiations to resume. So until the end, we will exert pressure for the negotiations to succeed.

We also share the same willingness to revive the peace process in the Middle East. Now that the elections in Israel are behind us, the Palestinian authorities are willing to commit themselves, we

shall make sure that both the United States and Europe can support the revival of negotiations that can lead to a two-state solution.

Then we also discussed the economy. Both the American administration and the French presidency have the same approach. We want our public accounts to be improved, rebalanced. We all inherited debts from the previous majorities. But beyond sorting out the debt and reducing the deficit, we both want to support growth. And I do not forget that the first international meeting I attended was the G8, and on that occasion, Barack Obama was hosting the foreign leaders, and he kept telling us that growth should be at the heart of our decisions. Fiscal seriousness and growth are not incompatible, and both the United States and France can prove it.

The last topic we discussed at a great length is climate. The duty that we have to bring to the next generations a planet that shall not be facing major disasters. So we have to make sure that in the context of the climate conference, we have to reach some tangible results.

This is what I can say about our meeting today. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs will soon be traveling to the U.S. in order to meet his counterpart, Mr. John Kerry. And there will be elsewhere -- many exchanges between myself and President Obama to discuss the many topics I just mentioned.

But the visit today of Mr. Joe Biden, Vice President of the United States, yet again an opportunity for us to say how strong the friendship between our two countries is.

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN: Mr. President, it is always a great pleasure -- and I mean that literally, a pleasure -- to visit France. And it was particularly nice to get a chance to have such a leisurely but informative lunch with you. Your hospitality is unmatched in the world, and I want to thank you for that.

And without saying -- it went without saying today that our agenda, our mutual agenda is global. It is not confined to any single issue or any single part of the world. It spans the globe.

And as the President indicated, we discussed an array of issues starting and including Mali and North Africa more broadly. And let me say again on behalf of the President, the people of the United States, we applaud your decisiveness and I might add the incredible competence and capability of your French military forces.

I often tell the story -- I've been in and out of Afghanistan and Iraq an awful lot, several dozen times; and I remember the first time I was in a forward operating base up in the hills above the Kunar Valley, the mountains. And I asked early on in the campaign, before I was Vice President -- I asked my -- the six Americans who I was standing with who they enjoyed standing most together with. And one young man said, "the Tricolors, the French." And "they know how to shoot straight" was his expression. You have a brave and competent -- and I say to the Minister of Defense -- competent military. And your decisive action is not only in the interest of France, but quite frankly the United States and everyone.

The President shared his insights of his recent trip to Bamako and to Timbuktu, and we agreed on the need to as quickly as reasonably possible establish -- the establishment of an African-led international mission to Mali, and to as quickly as is prudent transition that mission to the United Nations.

We also support the political process that France is leading to restore a democratic government in Mali. The President indicated as well that we discussed the importance of working with our regional partners to counter terrorism across North Africa and beyond. We spent no little time discussing how terrorist organizations metastasized and why additional strategies will be necessary going into the future to deal with this new threat.

I emphasized the importance of working with the new government of Libya and building an -- effective security institutions, as well as I commended France once again on its leading role.

On Syria, as the President mentioned, we discussed what more can be done to address the situation and also briefly discussed the humanitarian crisis affecting Syria and its neighbors. We both fully support the Syrian opposition coalition, the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. And I recounted my meetings on Saturday in Germany with President al-Khatib, as well as a long meeting I had with the U.N.-Arab League Joint Special Representative Mr. Brahimi. And I filled the President in on the detail of those discussions.

Our conversation also ventured into Afghanistan where we have stood together in a stalwart way. We reviewed our strategic vision, how to secure and stabilize Afghanistan.

President Hollande and I also reminded one another of the firm commitments of all NATO leaders in Chicago to both sustain NATO's mission in Afghan post-2014 and to remain in incredibly close contact as to how to proceed.

And finally, we did discuss -- we also discussed Iran. I complimented the President and his predecessor on the strong stand that France has taken to make it clear to Iran that we mean business. These are the most consequential sanctions in no small part because of France's leadership that have been imposed in the, oh, 40 years that I've been involved in international affairs. And they are -- and this next phase which kicks in now, this month is -- must be followed through.

We are prepared, the President asked me about the statement made in Munich, and I just pointed out, I reiterated what has been our position: When and if the Supreme Leader and the Iranians are prepared to discuss the essence of what is at the core of this -- of these embargos, we're prepared to discuss. We never -- and we're prepared to meet with them individually after consultation with our partners the P5-plus-1, or as we say in Europe, the E3-plus-3. And we did discuss that. But we also share the view that there has been no real evidence of any movement thus far by the Iranians.

But as I said, we discussed economic issues as well, and I think the President summed it up very clearly. The President -- President Obama believes there is nothing inconsistent with dealing with putting our long-term debt in perspective and bringing it under control and generating economic growth. They should not be inconsistent. We know they're not inconsistent objectives. And we're hopeful that Europe and the entire EU will be more inclined to share your view, Mr. President.

And we also pointed out that too many families -- too many families in France, the United States, Europe as a whole, are still suffering from underemployment as well as unemployment. And again, we must speak to that.

I was impressed in the discussion we had relative to climate change -- and I mean this sincerely, Mr. President -- I could have been sitting in a private meeting with President Obama. He would have not said it in French, he'd say it in English, but you said the same thing. The President pointed out that there is an obligation here that extends way beyond these administrations. There is a need -- there is a need to set out a vision for the young people in both our countries that we understand -- we

understand. It's a rallying cry that can be a call for a united effort and support in both our countries to deal with global warming.

The President is committed to do that. And as I pointed out to the Foreign Minister, he is going to have an interlocutor in John Kerry. There is no one in my country who has been, over the period of time he's been in the Senate, more concerned with or knowledgeable about the issues relating to global warming. And so the President is -- President Obama is committed as well.

With regard to the -- back to the economy for just a moment. As I said in Europe -- I mean, excuse me, in Munich, Europe is our largest economic partner. Over \$600 billion in annual trade and \$5 trillion -- \$5 trillion in overall commercial relationships, creating literally millions of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. So the United States has a profound interest -- a profound interest in Europe's success, in Europe securing the foundations of its monetary union. It's overwhelmingly in our naked self-interest.

As you can see, we had a very full discussion of a number of issues. And I fear that both of our delegations were probably thankful that the dessert had come, because I'm afraid we could have gone on much longer. But I found it extremely helpful.

And, again, let me conclude, Mr. President, by saying on behalf of President Obama how much he looks forward -- how much he looks forward to working with you and France, because there's not a single issue that affects us on the international -- in the international arena that does not -- where our interests do not intersect. And we look forward to a very, very close relationship between our administrations.

And, again, thank you for the hospitality. I appreciate it very, very much. Thank you.

4. Europe Remains Cornerstone of U.S. Engagement, Biden Says (02-02-2013)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2, 2013 – Europe remains the cornerstone and catalyst for America's engagement with the world, Vice President Joe Biden said in Munich today.

The vice president spoke at the annual Munich Security Conference, where he also addressed the situation with Iran and what the nations of the world can do together to confront the terrorist threat.

The Munich Conference is one of the preeminent gatherings of security leaders in the world, and Biden is not stranger to the group. As a senator on the Foreign Relations Committee he often journeyed to Munich and he last addressed the body in 2009, as the newly elected vice president.

The sanctions the world has placed on Iran are working, the vice president said. He stated that the U.S. position on Iran is not containing the rogue nation from gaining nuclear arms, but preventing it. "We've also made clear that Iran's leaders need not sentence their people to economic deprivation and international isolation," he said. "There is still time, there is still space for diplomacy, backed by pressure, to succeed. The ball is in the government of Iran's court, and it's well past time for Tehran to adopt a serious, good-faith approach."

Biden contrasted what the world was like when he last addressed the conference in 2009. "Four years ago, the world was mired in the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression," he

said. "Today, times remain tough for too many American and European families -- but conditions are improving."

The United States and European nations must work to put their economies on a sound footing, he said. That, after all, is the key to national power and influence, Biden added.

In 2009, al-Qaida was on the ascendancy, the vice president said. "Osama bin Laden was alive and well and plotting against our countries, inspiring followers," he said. "Now, as a result of the joint efforts of all of our countries and renewed and relentless focus on counterterrorism, the cooperation of our law enforcement agencies, and President Barack Obama's unflinching determination to bring Osama bin Laden to justice, ... we've made progress. We've dealt that organization, al-Qaida, a crippling blow, and made all our homelands more secure."

Now it is the affiliates of al-Qaida that pose the danger, he said. Affiliates in Yemen, Somalia, North Africa, Iraq and Syria, while not posing the same threat as the original group, still are dangerous. "Increasingly they are targeting Western interests overseas," he said. "That's why we have been just as relentless in taking them on."

These extremists are exploiting porous borders, broad swaths of ungoverned territory, readily available weapons and "a swelling generation of disaffected young people whose futures are stifled by stagnant economies," he said.

The solution is not to spend billions on defense, but to reach out and engage these nations and peoples, Biden said. "It will take a comprehensive approach -- employing the full range of the tools at our disposal -- including our militaries," he said. "That's why the United States applauds and stands with France and other partners in Mali, and why we are providing intelligence support, transportation for the French and African troops and refueling capability for French aircraft. The fight against (al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb) may be far from America's borders, but it is fundamentally in America's interest."

Biden noted there has been progress over the past four years in many areas, but much remains to be done. The issues confronting the United States and Europe are solvable, he said, but the nations must work together closely to address those issues.

Over the next four years, he said, the United States wants to advance a comprehensive nuclear agenda to strengthen nonproliferation; combat climate change; enhance initiatives to promote global health and food security and end extreme poverty; and strengthen alliances.

"As I hope we'll all agree, although our mutual agenda has shifted over the past four years, one important thing remains unchanged: We need to work together; we need to stick together," Biden said. "We need you as much as you need us. Neither the United States nor any other country can alone address the challenges we face."

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5. Partners Essential in Strategic Transition, Carter Says (02-02-2013)

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

MUNICH, Feb. 2, 2013 – The United States is embarked on a strategic transition fueled by the end of a decade of war and by new fiscal and security challenges, but it won't have to make the journey alone, Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said here today.

Speaking as part of an expert panel at the 49th Annual Munich Security Conference, Carter explored for an audience of international foreign and defense ministers and security policy officials the tenets of a defense strategy for the 21st century.

"We don't see this as something we do alone," Carter told participants from around the world.

"Our principle security allies, many of whom have been involved at least in Afghanistan, are making the same kind of transition," he said. "You're all challenged by that transition."

The panel, whose discussion focused on the future of European defense, included Netherlands Defense Minister Jeanine-Antoinette Hennis-Plasschaert, Russian Federation Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov, European Union Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier, NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation Gen. Jean-Paul Paloméros and others.

The United States prefers alignment with its friends, Carter added, including "all of the countries represented up here on this stage and many more. It helps us to know where they're headed and it helps them to know where we're headed."

Emerging from a necessary preoccupation with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the deputy secretary said, the Defense Department is addressing security challenges that will define its future.

In that effort, Carter added, "there are opportunities to do that together with our security partners."

Principles embodied in the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance include taking lessons from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to make fighting forces leaner and more agile, using approaches related to and aligned with the NATO Response Force concept of a highly ready and technologically advanced multinational force made up of land, air, maritime and special operations forces components that can quickly deploy.

Another tenet of the new defense strategy is a rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, which, Carter noted, "is not a rebalancing away from Europe because our interests are enduring here."

Europe is a source and not a consumer of security in today's world, the deputy secretary said, "and we look ... to rebalance with Europe, not away from Europe."

Unlike Europe, he added, "Asia has no NATO ... has had no way of knitting together countries and healing the wounds of the Second World War" and earlier conflicts. And yet the region has enjoyed peace, stability and therefore prosperity for 70 years.

“That's good but it's not automatic,” Carter said. “And I think a central reason for that peace and prosperity has been the pivotal role of American military power in that part of the world.”

Another important tenet of the defense strategy is to pursue the very newest in technology and operational art, he said, adding that President Barack Obama was insistent on this focus. Investments in this area target special operations forces, capabilities in space and in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and cyberspace.

“In all those areas our direction was that we were to not only protect but enhance those capabilities and our strategy and investments,” Carter added. “And we're doing that.”

For DOD, he noted, the desire to work with partners extends both to nations and to defense companies at home.

“Our partnership with industry is central,” Carter said, “second only to our people in uniform. It is the systems provided by the defense industry that make our military great.”

Defense industry companies are DOD partners in protecting the country, the deputy secretary observed, “so as we make this strategic transition, we must do it in a way that ensures industry remains strong, technologically vibrant and financially successful.”

Defense leaders and managers must always work to deliver better buying power for the defense dollar, Euro or pound, Carter added, “both to deliver more capability for the funding we receive and to sustain the taxpayers’ faith in us and their willingness to give us funds.”

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[6. State’s Richard at International Pledging Conference for Syria \(01-31-2013\)](#)

*Remarks by Anne C. Richard, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
Kuwait, January 30, 2013*

International Pledging Conference for Syria

Your Highness, Mr. Secretary General, esteemed colleagues. I wish to thank His Highness the Emir of Kuwait and the United Nations for hosting this pledging conference. The International Community must be united in addressing the enormity of humanitarian needs. Today is an important opportunity to commit funds for the people of Syria whose lives have been so deeply affected by this crisis.

Innocent suffering and displacement within Syria have grown exponentially over the past year. Four million people inside Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance and more than 700,000 Syrians

have fled to neighboring countries. I am pleased to lead the U.S. delegation along with Nancy Lindborg, Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development. In the past few days we have met with Syrian refugees in Turkey and Jordan and discussed the brutal tragedy inside Syria that has prompted them to flee, and we heard their pleas for help for their relatives and friends who are suffering. We must do more now and we must do so with the moral support and financial backing of more governments.

The United States recognizes the UN's leadership, strongly supports the UN's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, and appreciates the UN's critical coordinating role. International humanitarian and non-governmental organizations have technical expertise and well-developed operational capacity. In keeping with humanitarian principles, the UN serves those in greatest need wherever they may be. The UN is mounting a response that is saving millions of lives. Its network in Syria is broad: 11 UN agencies operating in Syria and over 4,300 staff, most of whom are brave Syrians doing their utmost to protect and aid their fellow citizens.

We know this is not enough. Creative efforts are needed within Syria and we must collectively reach more communities. This requires consistent, secure access and sufficient resources. The Syrian Government must stop obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and likewise no armed opposition group should hinder aid delivery. We praise the effort and sacrifices of the many relief workers who are operating day and night to get more aid into Syria.

We believe that the Syrian Opposition Coalition can help facilitate secure, reliable access to areas outside government control so professional humanitarian organizations can reach those in need. The UN has been clear: its assistance is solely for the benefit of the Syrian people. However, we also know there are too many Syrian families who are not receiving the urgent aid they need. We all must continue to prevent the misuse of humanitarian assistance for political purposes and continue to ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered to people based on need.

Since the early days of the crisis, the United States has been leading relief efforts as the largest bilateral donor, and is using all partners and networks possible to reach the Syrian people. We applaud and welcome the generosity of Kuwait this morning. We thank other nations represented here today who have also provided aid, but our collective efforts are not enough. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating rapidly. We urge all nations to demonstrate their unwavering commitment to the Syrian people by robustly contributing to the UN humanitarian appeals. We must not let the relief efforts falter for lack of funding.

Yesterday, the President of the United States of America announced that the United States is providing an additional \$155 million in humanitarian assistance for the people of Syria and others suffering from the violence. This new funding includes the \$10 million announced by our delegation during our visit in Turkey. We are pleased to present this additional assistance here today. With this new \$155 million, the U.S. is now providing more than \$365 million in humanitarian assistance in response to this regional crisis to date.

This additional assistance will enable the UN and its partners and other non-governmental organizations with which we are working to expand aid operations for Syrians across the country. Last week, for example, the U.S. launched flour deliveries to bakeries in Aleppo Governorate, reaching 210,000 people. We are funding emergency health care and supplies, which enable surgeons in field hospitals to save more lives. For those taking refuge in damaged buildings, we will continue to provide winter supplies such as blankets, heaters, and heavy-duty plastic sheeting to cover broken windows and other damage. We are supporting the provision of emergency assistance,

shelter, health care, and community protection to more than one million conflict victims. And, our increased funding will aid Palestinian refugees affected by the violence inside Syria.

We will increase our support for relief efforts for those who have fled Syria to neighboring countries, and we recognize and applaud the generosity of the governments and people of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and other nations hosting Syrian refugees. These countries have taken on a significant burden and we have told them you are not alone. Most refugees are in host communities rather than in camps; our assistance is dedicated to them as well. U.S. funding enables the UN and other organizations to: help the wounded; provide hot meals, daily bread, dry rations, and food vouchers; transport refugees from border areas to safe shelter; and importantly, pay particular attention to the needs of women and girls, including preventing and responding to violence against women and providing health care to the victims.

Even as we condemn the escalating violence that has created this humanitarian emergency, the United States affirms its commitment to helping alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. As the President said in his announcement, "The Syrian people will have their chance to forge their own future. And they will continue to find a partner in the United States of America."

Thank you.

7. Dempsey: Coast Guard Mission 'Constant' (01-31-2013)

By Claudette Roulo
American Forces Press Service

NEW LONDON, Conn., Jan. 31, 2013 – The Coast Guard has a constant mission, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told cadets at the Coast Guard Academy today.

"The military -- and I include you in that joint force -- we are the preeminent leadership experience in the world," Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said during an all-hands assembly of cadets.

That leadership experience means being a military professional and accounting for both yourself and your institution, he said. "It's not just about you anymore. ... You have to continue your own development, both because you should, but also because of what it does for the profession."

This includes developing and taking pride in unique skills and techniques, the chairman said. "Nobody else can be the Coast Guard," he said. "We can't outsource it."

The military has become more complex since he was a lieutenant, Dempsey said. The services have restructured in response to threats that were once the sole domain of nation states but are now in the hands of decentralized organizations, the chairman said. And now, more responsibility is placed on young leaders than ever before, he added.

"We have to be a network in order to defeat a network," Dempsey said.

Leadership is the most solemn duty of all, the chairman said. "Leadership is why we get up in the morning."

Professional creeds and values can't be abstract for those in leadership positions, he said. "You've got understand what it means to be committed, to serve selflessly, to be courageous, to have

integrity, to live up to your creed here,” the general said. “... and you’ve got to develop a bond of trust like in no other occupation in the world.”

Leadership is a combination of character and competence, Dempsey said. “You can be the most competent man or woman, but you’re not a leader unless you have character.”

“You can’t develop trust absent character,” he continued. Competence is important, he said, but “if your subordinates don’t want to be you when they grow up, then you’re not a leader.” And trust is what allows the military to function, the chairman said.

“You don’t get on an icebreaker and head out to the arctic to bang away at 15 or 20 feet of ice unless you trust that, first of all, the captain of the ship knows what he’s doing and secondly, that everybody on that team knows what they’re doing,” he said. “You can sleep when it’s your turn to sleep because somebody else has the watch.”

Dempsey told the cadets that the world in which they will soon be working is one where change will occur faster than they expect and “it will be more complex ... it’ll be unpredictable, and it’ll be more dangerous.”

This will require leaders to have a firm understanding of national interests, Dempsey said. In its position at the nexus between law enforcement and the military, the Coast Guard plays an integral role in defending those interests, he added.

In response to cadet questions following his speech, the chairman spoke about the budget crisis, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and the effects of the recent end to the combat exclusion rule.

The budget crisis isn’t a new situation, Dempsey said. “It’s the worst it’s been, but it’s not new.” Budget crises have followed previous wars, he said.

Where the current crisis differs, he said, is not in its magnitude, but in the amount of time the Defense Department has to deal with it.

"I'm not one that says don't you dare think about taking another dollar from the defense budget," Dempsey said. Refusing all cuts or walling off certain projects won't help the department contribute to the nation's economic well-being, he added.

The department needs budget certainty, time and flexibility from Congress, the chairman said.

"We can't do this every year," he said. "We do embrace change. We don't do real well with uncertainty, and we have enormous uncertainty right now."

If cuts are to be made, he said, the department needs time to absorb them and the flexibility to apply them in a balanced way. "Every time they deny us the ability to touch a piece of the budget, we can't keep it in balance and what generally pays the price then is readiness," he said. "I can't let readiness erode."

Dempsey told cadets the military has to be attuned to how it employs violence, particularly with unmanned aerial vehicles. UAVs have become more precise than they were initially, he added, and rely on multiple layers of intelligence to ensure that civilian casualties are minimized. "I think, as you migrate into the force and have access to these capabilities, you should think about how we employ violence," he said. "... For what intention are you applying violence? Have you exhausted other means? Are there other means?"

The standards are clear for the application of violence, he said, whether you're talking about a bayonet or a UAV. The real question, the chairman added, is whether the use of UAVs is overcoming the ideology behind movements that seek to harm the U.S.

Turning to the role of women, he said, "The 1994 exclusion of women in combat had become embarrassing." This was because it ignored the reality of women's military service, he added.

"It was an anachronism," Dempsey continued. "It was an emotional anachronism." The rule served to discourage an examination of standards for military occupations across the board, he said. Now, the chairman added, the question isn't whether a woman should serve in the formerly closed occupations, but "why shouldn't they?"

He noted that not all men can, or even want to, qualify to serve in combat specialties. "I don't wear a Ranger tab," he said. "I'm not an infantryman, I'm an armor officer. I chose to ride to work," he joked.

The end of the combat exclusion rule means that he has access to the deepest talent pool available, Dempsey said. Only one in four men of military age in the U.S. qualify for military service, he said, and that population isn't becoming healthier or more educated. From his perspective, he said, the best reason to open combat specialties to women is that "we're going to need them ... I want to have as much talent available as I can possibly have."

Biographies:

[Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey](#)
